Definitions

I use *Pagan* to mean a member of a polytheistic nature religion, such as the ancient Greek, Roman, or Egyptian religions, or, in anthropological terms, a member of one of the indigenous folk and tribal religions all over the world. People who have studied the classics or have been deeply involved with natural or aboriginal peoples are comparatively free of the negative and generally racist attitudes that surround the word *Pagan*.

Isaac Bonewits uses the term *Neo-Paganism* to refer to 'polytheistic (or conditional monotheistic) nature religions that are based upon the older or Paleopagan religions; concentrating upon an attempt to retain the humanistic, ecological and creative aspects of these old belief systems while discarding their occasional brutal or repressive developments, which are inappropriate. Another Neo-Pagan writer, Otter Zell of the Church of All Worlds, has written that Neo-Pagans see divinity manifest in all the processes of nature. According to his view, Neo-Paganism is a constantly evolving philosophy that views humanity as a 'functional organ within the greater organism of all Life.'

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The word *Witchcraft* comes from the Old English *wicce* or *wicca*, referring to female and male practitioners, respectively. Many Witches have said that these two words derive from the root 'wit' or wisdom. Others… have said the word derives from the Indo-European roots 'wic' or 'weik,' meaning to bend or turn. According to this view, a Witch would be a woman (or man) skilled in the craft of shaping, bending, and changing reality.

Margot Adler (1979). *Drawing Down the Moon*, Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 10-11.

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The Wiccan Rede

"An' it harm none, do as ye will."

A Pagan/Polytheistic Understanding of the Twelve Steps

Printed in the May issue of the Covenant of The Goddess (COG) bimonthly, national newsletter; a publication written by and for the Neo-Pagan Witchcraft community on the web at http://www.recovery.org/aa/aa-related/pagan.txt.

Essay by: Nora

I need to write this essay under a pseudonym because, while I need to discuss my own experience, I also need to respect the tradition of anonymity in the Twelve-Step Programs. Anonymity is needed, not so much to protect my privacy, but to protect the program against my potential megalomania. Although I would be happy to identify myself to anyone privately, I must abide by the Eleventh tradition, which states, "We need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

As for my qualifications for writing this essay: I have over 6 years of sobriety in the Alcoholics Anonymous program, and 1 year of recovery in the Adult Children of Alcoholics, and Al-Anon programs. Although I have been a consciously practicing Pagan and Witch for only 1 year, my personal theology has been polytheistic for over 15 years.

I will discuss each of the twelve steps in turn, sharing my understanding of these steps within the context of a Pagan theology. I can only share my own experience and my own understanding. I in no way claim to speak for all Pagans or for all members of Twelve-Step programs. I wish to share what works for me in the hope that some or all of it may work for someone else. As I was told at my first meeting, "Take what you like and leave the rest."

I do not see these steps as a set of directions; rather, they are a description of a process, the process of spiritual and emotional growth. My understanding of this process has continued to evolve, mature, deepen. I've come to believe that the only step limited to those of us with some type of addictive/compulsive behavior is Step 1; the rest of the steps can be experienced by anyone. The process of Steps 2 to 12 -- reaching toward divinity, knowledge of self, attainment of serenity through knowledge of the divine -- has been described by Socrates, Aquinas, the Kabalists and other Ceremonial Magicians, the Shamans, and others (to greater or lesser extents). I propose that what Bill Wilson and his colleagues did was describe this ancient spiritual process in a vocabulary that could be understood by the working-class drunk. In no way did this diminish the power or mystery of spiritual metamorphosis.

As in the ancient schools and spiritual / magical disciplines, you do not walk the journey of the 12 Steps alone. The role of Mentor/Teacher within the Anonymous programs is fulfilled by the Sponsor; and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the men and women who have held my hand during my journey: Gina, Pat G., Dorothy B., Jim R., Nancy, and Despie -- Blessed Be!

Step 1. *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.*

In September 1981 I could not deny that I was powerless over alcohol; that from the moment I took the first drink I could not predict my behavior. I could also see that a lot of the unmanageability I was experiencing in my life was a

direct result of my drinking. This insight was a double-edged sword; the knowledge that I was controlled by a substance that I thought I controlled was completely demoralizing; but I was liberated by the message that I would be free by refusing the first drink.

I am one of the lucky ones. I haven't found it necessary to take that first drink since my first meeting (not everyone who comes to A.A. is given this blessing). However, with this blessing comes the knowledge that the unmanageability in our lives is not due only to our drinking. Step 1 does not say "therefore our lives . . ." If there were a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the drinking and unmanageability, there would be no need for Steps 2 through 12. As the alcohol left my system, I began to understand the threefold nature of the disease of alcoholism: physical, emotional, spiritual. Once the physical part of the disease had been dealt with, by the actual detoxification and abstinence from alcohol, I became aware of the emotional and spiritual sickness in my life, and I began my journey through the steps.

Step 2. *Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

My initial panic with this step was over the phrase, "restore us to sanity." All my life I've known I was different, been told that I was crazy! How could I be restored to something I had never experienced? Gina convinced me that at some point, maybe when I was two cells big, I was sane. I have come to believe that the gods intend for me to be healthy and sane, that I can be "restored" to sanity even if I am being restored to something that had previously existed only as an intention.

Now, I could look at the first part of the sentence, "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves." I knew I couldn't re-store myself to sanity; therefore, if it could be done, it would have to be done by a power greater than me. (I'd been reared in a Catholic household, and I had been a "searcher" since about age 12; that was when I decided that there was a logical inconsistency in Catholicism as I saw it: if God was infinite, why would He have only one path leading to him? An infinite god would have infinite paths. Curiously, this led to six years of constant battle with my parents as I explored one church after another. Unfortunately, I'd never connected with one that met my needs, not until February 2, 1987, when I met The Lady.)

So, yes, I believed there was a power, divine, greater than me, who could restore me to sanity. I didn't know what or who it was. Would "it" restore me? If it didn't, I would die: this I KNEW. I chose to believe it would until proven otherwise.

Would anyone who had not (at some level) reached the cross-roads described by this step begin to search for a connection with divinity? I think not. There must be a need, a void that must be filled, before someone will begin the arduous journey toward the gods; the search inside and outside yourself for the Maiden, Mother, and Crone, the Child, Father, and Wise One.

Step 3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.*

Again, I started at the end of the sentence. Did I understand God, and if so, how? My understanding has undergone tumultuous evolution throughout my sobriety. Sometimes I needed the white-haired, long-bearded father of my childhood fantasies; the ethereal nonentity / energy / force of my adolescence. I still couldn't pigeonhole god. The Siddha tradition beckoned, but wasn't the

answer. My mind could not encompass undifferentiated infinity; yet any attempt to define it denied the infinite reality of the divine. The polytheistic pantheon model of divinity answers my need. I can communicate with subsets, or aspects, of the infinite godhead. The gods and goddesses are nodes in the holograph that is divinity.

Could I turn my life and my will over to the care of the gods? What of "free will," that essence of being human? Would it be taken from me? I felt that the key was in the word "care"; to be cared for is not the same as to be dominated. To be cared for is to be given direction, but the decision to follow that direction was still mine. The decision of this step is actually a conscious affirmation of our relationship with the divine: we are children of the gods. My initiation as a Priestess of the Craft, a dedication of my life as a member of The Lady's clergy, was a dynamic Third Step; it was taking this step into a dimension I had never experienced, in fact, had never dared to dream possible.

Step 4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." With Step Four we identify the recurring patterns of our lives, in order to see where our personal strengths and weaknesses lie. Some people reach this point in their program and attempt to write elaborate autobiographies. On more than one occasion I have seen others become mired in confusion by approaching this step in that manner. I have found that listing specific subjects, and then looking back to see how I have handled these in the past, is the clearest way for me to spot patterns.

Relationships:
How do they tend to begin?
How do they tend to end?
Do my partners have common characteristics?

Money:
How do I earn it?
How do I spend it?
How do I control it?
What have I owned?
What do I own now?

Time:
How do I spend my time?
Do I "run out" of time?
How would I prefer to spend my time?
Why don't I spend my time the way I want to?
Are there activities I want to add/eliminate?

Self-image:
How do I perceive myself:
Physically
Intellectually
Emotionally
Spiritually

What is the external evidence:
Weight?
Academic achievement?
Mood swings:
Time devoted to meditation/spiritual reading?
Where does my perception match the evidence; where does it differ? Why?

There are an infinite variety of subjects that could be used to find our behavior patterns. It is very important to remember to look for our positive characteristics as well as the negative; this is not an exercise in self-flagellation! It is an honest appraisal of who we really are: what we like about ourselves, what we don't like but cannot change (I'm never going to be any taller than I am today), what we don't like that we can change (I've been divorced twice, and I don't want to go through that again).

During Step Four we do not concern ourselves with how we're going to change our behavior or mend broken relationships. This is an information-gathering process. Again, as with Step Three, the Craft offers tools with which to work this step in an entirely new dynamic.

By using the "Meditation Room" (internal astral temple), path-working, Shamanic journeying, and totem identification as information sources, I have been able to learn more about myself than ever before. When my spirit guide made Herself known to me, I spent weeks meditating on why this particular aspect had come to me. I knew that Her identity held a key to who I really was, what I was looking for, what I needed in order to recover.

I've also been able to use these magical tools to identify the child within who had been abused by my parents, and to identify other ACA issues.

Step 5. *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

First, when working with a pagan theology, we can choose which God/Goddess/Gods to work with here. In Alcoholics Anonymous, Athene or Apollo would be appropriate; for Overeaters Anonymous, Demeter comes to mind, etc.

Next, this is NOT an act of confession, a search for forgiveness or absolution. It is a continuation in our journey to know ourselves honestly. It has been my experience that we share not only our wrongs, but also our rights; we share what we have learned in Step Four.

My personal theology is based on divinity as simultaneously transcendent and immanent; so admitting to "God" was inherent in the process of writing and talking with another person.

Why the other person? Because humans are very gifted at lying to themselves. What I had learned about myself in Step Four was of no active use to me as long as it remained my secret. I have an in-credible ability to "forget" what I have discovered if that discovery remains silent. The other person is also important because I tend to be unreasonably hard on myself, to chastise myself when it is not appropriate, to fail to give myself credit for the good I do and for my talents. The other person is our reality check.

I have worked this step with sponsors and my therapist. As I shared with them, I would be confronted if my perception of myself was being warped or

clouded by insecurity or egomania. In no way did I expect these people to forgive, heal, fix, or change my life for me. The act of verbalizing my feelings about me and my behavior made it impossible to deny that this was indeed how I felt. My mind could no longer play its circuitous game with me, sending me spiraling down through never-ending discovery and denial. That pattern was broken; so now I could begin to break the others I had identified.

Step 6. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

We have the same choices with the word "God" here as we had in the previous step. The "defects of character" are the patterns that we identified in Step Four and shared in Step Five, and that we no longer wish to repeat. Some defects were at one time very useful defenses.

As a child I maintained a fantasy life in my head, that I could escape to, in order to survive in the violent, abusive environment I grew up in. But as an adult, maintaining a parallel, fantasy life was blocking my attempts to manifest the life I wanted. A sophisticated and successful childhood defense had become a destructive defect.

As long as a "defect" is useful, we cannot become willing to have it removed; but once we grow beyond the defense and recognize the behavior as destructive, as a "defect," we can become willing to live without it. This decision, this change in perception, this willingness, is the entirety of this step. It is very simple and sometimes extremely difficult.

Step 7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*

I change "Him" to "Her/Them" in my understanding of this step.

There is a legend in A.A. that someone once asked Bill Wilson (who wrote the Steps) why Step Five refers to "wrongs," Step Six to "defects of character," and Step Seven to "shortcomings." He replied, "I didn't want to repeat myself."

To be "humble" is to be conscious of your defects: so if I ask to have a defect removed, I am, by definition, humble. There is no groveling inherent in the concept of humility.

I ask the gods to remove these unwanted patterns of behavior, because I cannot do it alone. If I could live my life without the gods, I would never have sought a conscious connection with them. That connection is that spark of divinity within me that gives me life; it is the true essence of my humanity. Therefore, I am capable of nothing without the gods, for I would not Be without the gods.

However, could the gods change my life and the patterns of my life without my knowledge or petition? Most certainly, that happens to me all the time. When I ask for help, to have something removed from my life, I am affirming for myself what was already to be. For once a pattern is recognized as useless, it will cease to exist. The petition to the gods is not what causes the removal; the petition is to remind me of my relationship with divinity. The strengthening of my understanding of my relationship to the gods is the spiritual journey that will heal me.

Step 8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*

As I analyzed the patterns of my life in Step Four, I became aware of the people in my life who had caused me pain and those that I had hurt in some way. I went back and listed the people I had harmed and a brief description of the

circumstances. I asked myself if I was willing to apologize for my behavior within the relationship, and became willing to clean up my side of the street.

My experience has been that this step helps me understand how I behave in interpersonal relationships. I could no longer deny my possessiveness, my neediness, my lack of tact or subtlety, the times I had resorted to emotional blackmail in order to get my way. And, as my sponsor instructed me, I put myself on the list. I owed myself amends. I could see when I had allowed myself to become the "doormat," to be victimized. I could not expect my parents to make restitution for their abuse, but I could talk to the child within, hold her, allow her to play and have her fantasies realized. I have been able to do these things in my internal "meditation room." The experiences have been very powerful, and have left me feeling whole and serene.

Step 9. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

A sponsor's guidance with this step is imperative; often a newly sober alcoholic will cause unwarranted pain and chaos while attempting to make right all the wrongs of the past. My sponsor stopped me when I wished to apologize for what I knew I had done, whenever the "wronged" party was unaware of my actions; for the amend would have caused pain instead of healing. And, I was told, I was one of the "others". If in making amends I was endangering myself, I was to wash my hands of the relationship and not attempt the contact, or else send a letter instead of facing the person directly.

My apology to my first husband was done via letter for this reason. I was afraid of physical violence if I went to see him, and yet I needed to own my wrongdoing in the relationship. I sent a letter; he wrote back saying he was sorry I was still so mentally ill. So I learned another hard lesson with Step Nine: we have no control over how our attempts to mend the torn relationships in our lives will be accepted.

I have found that to do what is ethically right, without expecting right action in return, is often very difficult, sometimes frightening, and sometimes horribly painful.

For me, the most difficult spiritual lesson I have learned from this step has been a recognition of my personal rights, and the knowledge that the times when I have done the greatest harm to myself have always been when I have tried to meet someone else's needs at the expense of my own physical, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.

Step 10. *Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.*

A continuous analysis of the status of our lives allows us to monitor our recovery, to clean up the wreckage of our all-too-human errors. I have come to view "guilt" as a form of self-bondage; when my actions within a relationship haunt me, I need to take action to restore the serenity that I now view as my rightful way of life. Often the guilt I feel is the result of my having denied my own rights in a situation: by failing to provide a safe environment for myself, by shrinking away from stating my wants or needs, by denying my right to live happily. There have been times when, in order to make amends to me, I've had to walk out of a situation, a job, a relationship. Doing so has been frightening, and painful; but I've become more whole, serene, and healthy as a result of taking care of me.

Step 11. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.*

I am filled with such gratitude for the tools of conscious contact with the divine in the Craft that it is hard to find words to describe what this step is like for me now. I spent years looking for a form of prayer and meditation that would work for me: in Circle I have felt Her arms around me.

The grounding and centering meditations, the path workings, trance inductions, divination, Cakes and Juice, are all dynamic, life-giving forms of prayer. I no longer accept the existence of divinity on "blind faith"; I've seen Her, talked with Her, cried in Her arms, and have been healed by Her. I know that because of the gift of the Craft I have experienced a depth to this step that few of my "mundane" friends in the program will ever imagine, let alone experience.

To ask only for the gods' will for me, through divination or any other tool, seems to me why the tools are there. If the gods' will were of no consequence, we wouldn't bother the oracles in the first place. Whenever we invoke the gods, ask their protection, draw the power of The Mother into our bodies, we are asking for the power to do their will. They are the source of power, and as with any power source we must take the action to allow empowerment by connecting.

Step 12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

The result of these steps is spiritual awakening, the continual process of growing closer in understanding to the gods. These steps are a continual journey, for life doesn't stand still. We are either growing or decaying, recovering or sliding backwards. And, like physical life, spiritual life requires regeneration.

We need to pass on the gift of sobriety and serenity, pass on our personal understanding of the steps, in order to keep those gifts for ourselves. The process unfolds, becomes new, leads me to a new understanding, each time I've sat with a newcomer and shared my experience, strength, and hope. To carry the message to others in need is not proselytization in order to increase the size of the fold. In some ways it is much more selfish than that: to carry the message to others is the only way to continue the journey myself and to ensure my own sobriety.

Thinking the process through in my head, alone, will get me nowhere. I need to share the program in order to keep it alive. As a wise Rabbi once said, "Belief without action is meaningless." I cannot believe my way toward spiritual health: I must act my way toward it.

As a final note, I would like to mention my gratitude for the amount of support I have received in the Neopagan community. When I was first invited to a gateway Circle, the High Priestess asked if I had any problem with wine in Circle. I told her I didn't have any problem with it being there, but I couldn't drink it. From that Esbat on, the HPs used both juice and wine in Circle, in clearly different cups. This same HPs also ensured that there were sugar-free cakes available, since my consort also abstains from sugar. There have been well-attended A.A. meetings at the festivals I have attended, and these festivals and large Sabbats in our area have also had juice available in Circle. This understanding that some of our members need to abstain from alcohol is a sign of the spiritual strength within our community.

Drugs, Alcohol and the Pagan Community

© 1986 by Anna Moonowl

Making Choices, Taking Chances: Drug and Alcohol Use in Ritual

The issue of drug and alcohol use and abuse in the Pagan Community has not been addressed often and is probably controversial. Despite all the current media coverage of these subjects, I've only seen them addressed once by Pagans - at a COG Festival workshop, Abby Willowroot's "The Government Wants to Keep You Stoned" (1984 COG Grand Council).

People choose to use or avoid many substances for a variety of reasons, including allergy or other medical indication, conviction or personal preference. Some of those most commonly avoided are certain medications, other drugs, preservatives, tobacco, alcohol, salt or sugar. I will focus here on alcohol and drugs; please note that I am not making moral judgments on their use.

Surprisingly, at many Pagan functions it seems people forget that others may have made usage choices. Even people who are adamant in enforcing tobacco anti-smoking household rules may fail to understand someone else's desire to avoid exposure to marijuana smoke. I have been present at rituals where everyone else got stoned into near-catatonia, and the air was thick with smoke. I now try to discretely inquire if there will be drug use involved in a ritual before I go. If I don't get a negative response ("I don't know" doesn't hack it), I stay home..

It may be fairly straightforward to avoid drug use at gatherings, but alcohol use is woven deeply into Pagan ritual and custom, as well as being inescapable in modern society. Ritual drug use is uncommon - alcohol is commonplace. Other than the choice not to drink, some people cannot use alcohol for various reasons. These involve medical reasons - including alcoholism.

What about alcoholism? I'm not a specialist, but I'll give a try at a description. Alcoholism is a progressive, fatal disease that causes specific biochemical and neurological changes and damage. There is a genetic link in the susceptibility pattern. The alcoholic's body does not process alcohol in the same way as a non-alcoholic's does. Toxins are produced in the alcoholic's system that are not in the "normal" drinker's. This is coupled with a gripping physical addiction. People who are alcoholic usually have these biochemical changes and the addiction long before they show obvious signs of the disease, even to themselves. Alcoholism is not caused by over-drinking, nor is it due to emotional or psychological problems. It is usually the cause of such problems, as the disease follows its inevitable, ultimately fatal progression. Conservative statistics show that one person in ten is alcoholic. Anyone who would like the straight facts about this disease from a medical point of view should read Under the Influence by James R. Milam, PhD. and Katherine Ketcham (Bantam Books, 1983, $3.95). It's written in a layman's terminology and is compelling reading.

Many alcoholics are fortunate to have been diagnosed, and have received treatment. The fact is that once one's body has begun the biochemical changes that occur with alcoholism, one can never again use even small amounts of alcohol (or certain other drugs) without re-triggering or maintaining the chemical addiction response and the disease progression. It's a matter of life and death.

Why is this important to Pagans? Two reasons immediately come to mind. First, as a priesthood one of our responsibilities is counseling and referral. Alcoholism and substance abuse cause serious internal and inter-personal disruptions, and unless we can recognize it we cannot guide those in need to appropriate treatment. Second, because there are so very many Pagan rituals, feasts, gatherings and festivals where food and drink is offered that contain alcohol. I'm not recommending that we all become tee-totalers, but there are many occasions where alternatives have not been offered, and could have been, especially in ritual settings. I've seen brandy-soaked cakes and whiskey used as cakes and wine, for example. Sometimes it's hard to tell if an item contains alcohol (what if you've got a stuffed nose?). If the alcohol content is discovered, one can easily be faced with a choice of bowing out of a ritual, often after it has begun. It can be embarrassing or rude, declining the Cup or sniffing the Cakes before taking one, as well as leaving one with a feeling of spiritual incompletion at not being able to partake fully in a ritual of one's religion. I've tried "anointing" with wine rather than drinking, but it's just not the same.

Non-drinking alcoholics usually do not introduce themselves to all they meet with, "Hi, I'm Bob/Jane, I'm an alcoholic and I'd like you to point out anything that has alcohol in it so I can avoid it." Some Pagans who would like to attend open rituals or festivals avoid them for this reason. On the other hand, not everyone who chooses to avoid alcohol is alcoholic. It remains a personal choice.

I would like to see Pagans routinely offer a choice to people attending rituals - a choice to avoid alcohol, drugs or sugar, and still partake fully in worship. How about a non-alcoholic drink being offered with the Wine? How about a biscuit or cracker being offered with the Cakes? How about mentioning if drugs will be a part of your ritual when you invite someone? Or perhaps a tradition could evolve to label "substance-free" gatherings as such; how about it?

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Reprinted from http://www.totse.com/en/religion/pagans_and_wiccans/sexdrugs.html

How I "Heal"

by Matrika of PAN - the Psychic Awareness Network

You asked what forms of healing people do and included things that might not be considered healing in the usual sense. Well, one of my special interests is Pagans in Recovery. This is a group of Pagans who are in 12-step recovery programs - Alcoholics Anonymous and other self-help groups that are based on A.A. such as Gamblers Anonymous, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeater's Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Emotions Anonymous etc. etc. etc. If you can think of an obstacle in your life or somebody else's, chances are that someone somewhere has started a 12-step program to deal with it.

The problem is that many Pagans, Feminist Priestesses, Shamans, Druids, and any other type of Magickal folk you can think of, often don't feel comfortable in AA and these related groups. WHY? The meetings CLOSE with the Lord's prayer or the "our father" and have many Christian overtones taken from the general culture, although they are technically supposed to be non-sectarian in their spiritual approach. Many Pagans in these groups find that they have trouble applying the steps of recovery in the context of what they believe to find recovery for their specific problems. This is particularly difficult in cases of Alcoholism and Drug addiction - and these problems DO exist to a great degree in the Pagan/Magickal communities - in which A.A. and Narcotics Anonymous are often the most successful treatment approaches available to the average person and that feeling excluded from them can mean death, insanity or jail to the person who does not find the help they need.

While living in New England I wrote a series of articles on how to apply the steps of recovery in a Pagan/Magickal context in HARVEST - a popular newsletter for the Craft in that region, which is now becoming nationwide. The last of these was printed in Yule of 1989, just before I left to move here. At the same time I discovered PAGANS IN RECOVERY had been formed on a national basis in Ohio and had a list of a large number of people, as well as nationwide contacts for networking. (Pagans in Recovery is published for $8.00 a year - address Pagans in Recovery Newsletter c/o Bekki 6500 S.R. 356, New Marshfield OHIO 45766)

An interesting note is that we both started doing this work separately and originally I also had a network called PANTHEISTS IN RECOVERY. Neither of us had known of the others existence at the time of starting the work and taking these names. Pantheists in Recovery has since merged with the national network, as I saw no need to duplicate their excellent efforts. Another interesting note is that, in my case, doing this was inspired by J.A.C.S. - an organization for Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically dependent people and their Significant others. It had been founded for the same purpose by some Jewish folks in A.A. in New York City and has now spread across the country, to Canada, and to Israel with several thousand names on their mailing lists. These people also felt the need for support to integrate their recovery program with their religion because they were non-Christians.

A very special part of this extended "healing" work for me is that I have the support of my partner Koren, the sysop of PAN, who is my partner both in the Craft and in our lives together. Although he is not himself in any of these recovery programs, he has been very helpful and supportive of my work in reaching out to other Pagans who are also in these groups.

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From http://www.creativeanime.com/~iria/wicca/B_O_S/General/Magick/howiheal.txt

The Charge of the Goddess

"No one knows when or by whom it was first composed, or even whether it is authentically ancient," says Starhawk (1979), author of The Spiral Dance. One text such appears in Leland (1899). Other versions abound, as a simple web search will show, as well as a Charge of the God (see example below).

I am the Lady of the starry heavens.
I am She who is the Mother of all living things.
My hands have modeled the mountains and poured the oceans upon the earth.
I run the streams off the snow peaks and the rivers through green valleys.
Every snowflake, every speck of soil or sand bears my imprint.
I am the smallest spark, and the largest star and the vas ocean of space.

I am the consoler of the saddened and the healer of the sick.
I bring comfort to those upon earth and peace and understanding in death, for I am
the changing Goddess.
Forget not my darker side, hidden in the deepest reaches of your mind.
I have been in the underworld and I have returned.

Those who seek to know me, to feel my spirit, to win my favor and my grace:
Come to me with a sincere heart and 1?urn incense upon My alter.
Listen and be still, and look within.
You shall grow in wisdom and nobility of spirit,
if you understand that whatever your wants or attainments,
I have been you from the Start, and I am the Desire that remains.

Lady Setara

--

Charge of the God

Listen the words of the Great Father, who of old was called Osiris, Adonis, Zues, Thor, Pan, Cernunnos, Heren, lugh and by many other names:

"My Law is Harmony with all things. Mine is the secret that opens the gates of life and mine is the dish of salt of the earth that is the body of Cernunnos that is the eternal circle or rebirth. I give the knowledge of life everlasting, and beyond death I give promise of regeneration and renewal. I am the sacrifice, the father of all things, and my protection blankets the earth"

Hear the words of the dancing God, the music of whose laughter stirs the winds, whose voice calls the seasons

"I who am the Lord of the Hunt and the Power of the light, sun among the clouds and the secret of the flame, I call upon your bodies to arise and come unto me. For I am the flesh of the earth and all it's beings. Through me all things must die and with me are reborn. Let my worship be in the body that sings, for behold all acts of willing sacrifice are my rituals. Let there be desire and fear, anger and weakness, joy and peace, awe and longing within you for those too are part of the mysteries found within yourself, within me, all beginnings have endings, and all endings have beginnings."

Additional Web Resources

12steppagans@yahoogroups.com (discussion group)

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/12stepagans/
“This is a list for pagans in recovery, with a "goddess" of your own understanding. Share with us about your recovery as a pagan. This is a closed meeting.”

Wiccans and Pagans In Recovery (discussion group)

http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/wiccansandpagansinrecovery
12 Step club for Wiccans/Pagans

Pagans/Wicca 101

http://paganwiccan.about.com/cs/paganswicca101/
“Articles, pages, and FAQs designed to cover the very basics of witchcraft, Wicca, and other forms of paganism.”

The Crone’s College (Wicca 101)

http://hazelpa.tripod.com/thecronescollege/id8.html
“Through these lessons you will build a firm foundation for your travels down the lifepath of Wicca. This is a basics course. You will receive a basic working knowledge of Wicca in general and see how our Eclectic Tradition operates . We will cover a broad range of topics including Deity, Altar construction, Ritual tools, Sabbats and Esbats, Spellcraft, Ritual work, Ethical concerns, Divination, Meditation and much more. Our instructors will be available to help you along each step of the way. This is an intensive course we will give you a lot of information in a short time. Because of its time demands a firm commitment will be required to complete this course.

A few (of many) organizations

A'r nDraoi'ocht Fe'in: A Druid Fellowship - http://adf.org

The Church of All Worlds – http://caw.org

Circle Sanctuary - http://circlesanctuary.org

Covenant of the Goddess - http://cog.org

Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans - http://cuups.org